Parents' Intention Towards Early Marriage of Their Daughters in Jambi City: A Cross-Sectional Study From the Perspective of Social Norms

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Early marriage remains a significant social issue in Indonesia, with adverse economic and health consequences, particularly for young girls. In Jambi Province, the prevalence of early marriage is notably high. Social norms, including parental attitudes, normative expectations, and reference group practices, are critical factors influencing this phenomenon. **Objective:** This study aimed to analyze the role of social norms in shaping parents' intentions to marry off their daughters at an early age in Jambi City. **Methods:** A cross-sectional study was conducted among 200 parents using cluster sampling across 11 sub-districts in Jambi City. Data on parental attitudes, empirical and normative expectations, sanctions, and reference group practices were collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed using chi-square tests and multivariate logistic regression. **Results:** Parental attitudes (OR=4.08, 95% CI: 1.74–9.34, p=0.001), normative expectations (OR=3.62, 95% CI: 1.58–8.28, p=0.003), and reference group practices (OR=2.93, 95% CI: 1.36–6.33, p=0.009) were significantly associated with intentions for early marriage. Multivariate analysis confirmed parental attitudes as the strongest predictor (OR=3.42, 95% CI: 1.46–8.00, p=0.005). **Conclusion:** Social norms significantly influence parents' intentions to marry off their daughters early. Strategies to mitigate early marriage should focus on educating parents and community leaders, enforcing regulations, and reshaping societal norms to protect adolescents' health and future.

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is closely related to religion, belief, and culture. In Indonesia, marriage is valid if it follows the rules of religion and belief of each individual, as well as following the rules made by the government regarding the minimum age limit for marriage, in this case it has been regulated in Law No.16 of 2019 Regarding Marriage (Kementrian Sekretariat Negara RI, 2019).

Early marriage is a marriage that occurs under the age of 19 (Kementrian Sekretariat Negara RI, 2019). Early marriage has consequences for many problems, not only health problems but also economic problems. Early marriage generally harms both men and women. They are very vulnerable to economic problems such as poverty, and health problems such as physical unpreparedness to reproduce with

consequences for the life of the young mother when giving birth, mental instability because they are not mature enough mentally, physically, and knowledge (Sagalova et al., 2021).

Globally, before the COVID19 pandemic, more than 100 million adolescent girls were expected to marry before the age of 18, and this number increased to 10 million adolescent girls at risk of marriage due to the effects of the COVID19 pandemic.(UNICEF, 2021). In Indonesia in 2018, UNICEF and BPS Indonesia predicted that 1 in 9 girls were married under the age of 18 and 1 in 100 boys were married under the age of 18, one of the highest rates in the world.(UNICEF, 2020) Of the 34 provinces in Indonesia, Jambi is one that has a high case of early marriage, where in 2019 there was a 14.8% incidence of marriage under the age of 18 (Kementerian Agama RI, 2019). Based on research also found that early marriage forces adolescents to quit school during secondary school. Adolescents then tend not to resume their education because they are hindered by husband's permission, childcare, costs, and even no desire or lazy to go back to school. If this condition continues, it will certainly have an impact on the quality of adolescents in the future (Fitri et al., 2022).

Many factors influence early child marriage, one of the common ones is parents' support for their children's marriage (Abdurahman et al., 2022). In a patriarchal culture and as part of the legal requirements of marriage in Indonesia, parents are an important substance in marriage. Often parents determine whether or not their children can marry and who they will marry, which is also the case in some countries (Anggraini et al., 2019). In addition, parents believe marrying off their children is a part of life where they have to conform to the social norms prevailing in their area (Bicchieri et al., 2014). Often reasons such as wanting to maintain honor, provide protection from pregnancy outside of marriage, religious factors, and customs become reinforcing factors for marrying off their children at an early age (Gage, 2013; Marshall et al., 2016). Therefore it is necessary to know how the relationship between parents' intention to marry off their children and the prevailing social norms. This study is expected to see how social norms play an important role in the intention of parents to marry off their daughters at an early age

METHODS

This study used a cross-sectional design using primary data collected in Jambi city, Jambi province, Indonesia. The sample in this study were 200 fathers and mothers, the sampling technique used cluster sampling from 11 sub-districts in Jambi city. The variables collected were characteristic variables such as parents' education, parents' working status, and income per month, then social norm variable data. Questions related to social norms are divided into 4 parts of questions, namely empirical expectations, normative expectations, sanctions, prevalence of group references. Questions regarding empirical expectations consist of 4 questions with each question having 4 response options using a Likert scale and normative expectations consist of 5 questions with each question having 4 response options using a Likert scale. The question about sanctions consists of 2 questions with each question having 4 responses using a Likert scale. The question regarding the early marriage in the reference group of 1 question with 4 responses using a Likert scale. The data collected was then analyzed univariately and bivariate chi-square test by calculating the Odds Ratio value to see the association between the dependent and independent variables. We also used multivariate analysis to look at possible confounding variables in the

study. The instruments used in this study were adopted from research instruments that had been approved by Haramaya University, Ethiopia, with Approval Number (IHRERC/177/2018) (Abdurahman et al., 2022).

RESULTS

Total of the 200 respondents included in the sample of this study, as ex-plained in Table 1 the most respondents based on the characteristics of high school education as much as 55.8%, based on working status are those who work 68.4%, and based on income / month more respondents have an income below Rp 1,500,000, -.

Table 1 Frequency Distribution Characteristics

Characteristics	f (%)
Education	
Elementary school	22 (10.7)
Secondary school	35 (17.0)
High school	115 (55.8)
Diploma	8 (3.9)
Bachelor's Degree	26 (12.6)
Working Status	
Not Working	65 (31.6)
Working	141 (68.4)
Income/Month	
< Rp 1.5 Million	94 (45.6)
Between Rp 1.5 M - Rp 2.5 M	32 (15.5)
Between Rp 2.5 M - Rp 3.5 M	37 (18.0)
> Rp 3.500.000	43 (20.9)

Source: Primary data, 2023

Table 2 shows that the majority of respondents generally have characteristics of attitudes that disagree with early marriage by 56.3%, Empirical Expectations disagree by 75.2%, Normative Expectations disagree by 53.9%, Agree on Sanctions Against Early Marriage by 54.4%, Early marriage in the reference group by 65.5%, and disagree on the Intention to Marry off Girls at an Early Age 84.5%.

Table 2 Characteristics of Respondent

Characteristics	f	(%)
Parental Attitude		
Agree	90	43.7
No	116	56.3
Empirical Expectation		
Agree	51	24.8
No	155	75.2
Normative Expectations		
Agree	95	46.1
No	111	53.9
Sanctions		
Agree	112	54.4
No	94	45.6
Early Marriage in Reference Groups		
Agree	71	34.5
No	135	65.5
Intention To Marry Off Girls At An Early Age		
Agree	32	15.5
No	174	84.5

Based on table 2, it is found that the majority of respondents generally have characteristics of attitudes that disagree with early marriage by 56.3%, Empirical Expectations disagree by 75.2%, Normative Expectations disagree by 53.9%, Agree on Sanctions Against Early Marriage by 54.4%, Disagree on the Conventionality to Perform Early Marriage by 65.5%, and disagree on the Intention to Marry off Girls at an Early Age 84.5%.

Table 3 Analysis Bivariate

Variables	Intention To Marry Off Girls At An Early Age				OR (95% CI)	Sig.
	Yes		No			
	n	%	n	%		
Attitude					4.08 (1.78 – 9.34)	0.001
Agree	23	25.6	67	74.4		
Disagree	9	7.8	107	92.2		
Empirical Expectation					2.07 (0.93 – 4.62)	0.111
Agree	12	23.5	39	76.5		
Disagree	20	12.9	135	87.1		
Normative Expectations					3.62 (1.58 – 8.28)	0.003
Agree	23	24.2	72	75.8		
Disagree	9	8.1	102	91.9		
Sanctions					1.27 (0.59 – 2.73)	0.670
Agree	19	17.0	93	83.0		
Disagree	13	13.8	81	86.2		
Early Marriage in Reference Groups					2.93 (1.36 – 6.33)	0.009
Agree	18	25.4	53	74.6		
Disagree	14	10.4	121	89.6		

The results of bivariate analysis in Table 3 between parental attitudes and parental intentions obtained an OR value of 4.08 CI 95% (1.78 - 9.34) at a significance of 0.001, meaning that attitudes have a significant relationship with the intention of parents to marry off their daughters at an early age and parents who have an agreeable attitude towards early childhood marriage are at risk of having the intention to marry off their daughters at an early age 4.08 times more likely than parents who have a disagreeable attitude.

Furthermore, bivariate analysis between empirical expectations and parental intention obtained an OR value of 2.07 CI 95% (0.93 - 4.62) at a significance of 0.111, meaning that empirical expectations do not have a significant relationship with the intention of parents to marry off their daughters at an early age.

Additionally, analysis between normative expectations and parental intentions obtained an OR value of 3.62 CI 95% (1.58 - 8.28) at a significance of 0.003, meaning that normative expectations have a significant relationship with the intention of parents to marry off their daughters at an early age and parents who agree with normative expectations are at risk of having the intention to marry off their daughters at an early age 3.62 times more likely than parents who disagree with normative expectations.

Additionally, bivariate analysis between sanctions and parents' intention obtained an OR value of 1.27 CI 95% (0.59 - 2.73) at a significance of 0.670, meaning that sanctions do not have a significant relationship with the intention of parents to marry off their daughters at an early age.

Lastly, analysis between prevalence and parental intention obtained an OR value of 2.93 95% CI (1.36 - 6.33) at a significance of 0.009, meaning that the prevalence of group references has a significant relationship with the intention of parents to marry off their daughters at an early age and parents who agree with the prevalence of group references are at risk of having the intention to marry off their daughters at an early age 2.93 times more likely than parents who do not agree with the prevalence of group references.

Table 4 Final Model of Multivariate Analysis

Variable	p-value	OR (95% CI)
Attitude	0.005	3.42 (1.46 – 8.00)
Early Marriage in Reference Groups	0.047	2.25 (1.01 – 5.01)

After the final stage of multivariate analysis in Table 4, no more variables were excluded from the model. From the table above, it can be concluded that the attitude variable is the most influential variable on early marriage in Jambi City after being controlled by the variable Early Marriage in Reference Groups.

Discussion

Parents with an attitude of agreeing to early marriage had a risk of intending to marry off their daughters at an early age 4.08 times greater than parents who disagreed with early marriage. Parents' intentions are generally directly proportional to their opinions regarding the approval of early marriage, this is what encourages that parents who have an agreeable attitude tend to intend to marry off their children, after all parents play an important role in the decision to marry off their children (Abdurahman et al., 2022; Baraka et al., 2022).

There was no significant relationship between the attitude of empirical expectations and parents' intention to marry off their daughters at an early age, this is not in accordance with the theory which explains that parents who live in areas where the community generally believes that most people in their reference group conform to the norms of early marriage (empirical expectations) will tend to have the intention to marry off their daughters as soon as possible, as is the case among their community (Abdurahman et al., 2022). A study showed similarly that adult decision makers (parents) agreed with the normative expectation that "Most people in this community expect girls to marry before the age of 18" (Steinhaus et al., 2019). Even if the majority community has or adheres to the social value of early marriage, parents who do not have a preference or conflict with their own family values will tend to feel pressured and will follow the prevailing value to marry off their children early (Psaki et al., 2021).

Parents who agreed with the normative expectations of early marriage had a risk of intending to marry off their daughters at an early age 3.62 times greater than parents who disagreed with the normative expectations of early marriage. Normative expectation is a prevailing value in society such as referring to the belief that most people in society expect girls to marry before a certain age (Steinhaus et al., 2019). Normative expectations that prevail in society can motivate adherence to prevailing values, if the community generally adheres to the value of early marriage, then it will motivate others to comply with such values and can shape behavior by encouraging individuals to act in accordance with what is considered acceptable by their social environment (Andrighetto et al., 2015).

There was no significant relationship between sanctions and parents' intention to marry off their daughters at an early age, this is not in accordance with theory, that a study revealed that early marriage is considered a way to protect the honor and reputation of the family, and parents who marry off their daughters early are seen as good parents (Mardi et al., 2018). There is a value in which parents look down on their daughters who get pregnant outside of marriage, so to avoid this, sometimes parents choose to marry off their children as soon as possible (Abdurahman et al., 2022). Because adolescent girls who become pregnant before marriage are often stigmatized by society. They are considered to be violating age norms for parenthood and are often members of a demeaned racial or socio-economic group (Smithbattle, 2020).

There was a significant relationship between the prevalence of reference groups and parents' intention to marry off their daughters at an early age, parents' intention to marry off their daughters early can be influenced by a person's behavior or the actions of other people or groups. Because there is a psychological urge to do something, for example, such as marrying off their daughters early because other groups (reference groups) do it (early marriage) (Walden University, 2023).

CONCLUSION

The proportion of parents who have the intention to marry off their daughters at an early age in Jambi city is 15.5%. There is a significant relationship between attitudes, normative expectations, and the prevalence of group references to the intention of parents to marry off their daughters at an early age in Jambi City. There is a need for continuous campaigns and education for parents, religious leaders, community leaders about the dangers of early marriage. There is a need for continuous campaigns and education for young children about the dangers of early marriage. Need for continuous supervision and application of rules against early marriage of girls.

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